2; Monteil--382 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

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[482]

[End Plate 2]

Fig. 3. Bambara girls in outdoor dress, Djenné Region.

Fig. 4. Bambara women and girls about to set down burdens carried on their heads, Djenné Region.

Plate 2

2: Monteil--383 G-5 (1902-1923) 1924 FA8 Bambara FA8

Plate 3

[307]

[End Plate 3]

Fig. 5. Bambara with his cheeks slashed in imitation of the tattooing characteristic of the slaves of the Kouloubali, Djenné region.

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Fig. 6. Woman and child, Djenné Region.

101 The Senoufo or Minianka, an important people in the circles of San, Koutiala, Bougouni, and Bobo Dioulasso, speak Sénoufo.

The Bobo in the region of San, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Dedougou, speak Bobo but are divided into two large branches according to their dialects: the Black Bobo and the Red Bobo.

The Dogon, remainder of the ancient inhabitants of the Nigerian regions from Bamako to Lake Débo, live for the most part in Bandiagara and Douentza and speak Dogon.

The Mossi live in Ouahigouya, Kaya, Tougan, Fada, and the circles of Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Tenkodogo and Dedougou; their language is Moré.

The Toucouleur, originally from the middle Senegal, are numerous particularly in Senegal and Mauritania; they also live in the region of Kayes and Bafoulabé.

Finally, the Touareg [Tuareg] roam from Goundam to Gouré. Their proportion of white blood is weak; the same thing applies to the Moors, Arabized Berbers who are counted with their former black captives. The tribes of the Niger region are the Almoussakaré, the Attouajiten, and the Eudde; they speak Touareg.

III. Physical Characteristics of the Bambara

142 History and ethnology show us that the Bambara of today is the product of several peoples whose origin is still unknown to us. Yet, common biological characteristics have developed so the Bambara distinguish themselves physically from other peoples, either by color (they say they are less black than the Bozo and the Sarakolé), by the structure of the body and musculature (they are tall, robust, muscled ... very different in that from the "feeble Peuls"), or by the form of the skull, with its receding forehead (that of the Peul is straight, "bulging and bumpy").

Tauxier, in his Histoire des Bambara [History of the Bambara], has given an anthropological description based on the work of the following authors: Quatrefages and Hamy, Crania ethnica [Ethnic Crania], 1882; Dr. Collomb, Bull. de la Soc. d'Anth. de Lyon [Bulletin of the Anthropological Society of Lyon], 1885; Hovelacque, Les Nègres d'Afrique sus-équatoriale [Negroes of Supra-Equatorial Africa], 1889; Dr. Verneau, Les races humaines [Human

142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

141 Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké, the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

142 Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly [147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an [164] excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma- [304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké. Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by 143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Étude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

181 "2. The Bambara makes a solid and disciplined infantryman ...
142 Mentally he is rather dull and stupid, physically he is stocky and solid." Previously, the Abbé Henry had concluded in these terms: "The Bambara is a farmer ... Well proportioned, his height is medium, neither tall nor short. His chest is strong, and his short, thickset neck supports a large head covered with black, wooly hair. Nothing in his visage betokens spiritual force, energy, intelligence. His forehead is receding, his eyebrow arches are rather pronounced, and his jet-black eyes, of which the white part is slightly cream (!), are straight. His jaws, nearly always well toothed, project slightly; he has strong, thick lips, a short chin, cheekbones ... a little projecting, and his flat nose is horribly open and squashed at its root.

145 "The wife, as well as the husband, is strong, robust. More
142 often than not she is knock-kneed, and this constitutional defect doubtless comes from the fact that she is obliged, from her earliest childhood, to carry rather heavy burdens on her head, burdens often too heavy for her strength [sic]. Mentally, the Bambara has a mind
181 as thick as his body. Slow to understand and lacking curiosity, he has no desire to improve his condition. 'What my fathers did, I must do' -- that is his great principle ... Lazy, good-for-nothing even, he believes he's done everything if he has enough in his granary to feed himself and his family ... Timorous, he fears the European exactly as a slave fears his master, and if he serves the European passably well, the latter is greatly mistaken if he thinks he has gained the native's affection. He detests the White, as he detests the Moslem; the White is the conqueror, an anti-fetishist, and therefore an enemy."

Finally, M. Monteil, in his Monographie de Djenné [Djenné
142 Monograph], tells us in his turn: "... elongated skull and pronounced
302 prognathism; the black, wooly hair is often gathered in braids by the young people ... the top of the head is often shaven, which makes the forehead look larger. The women affect a sort of transversal crest.

142 "The forehead recedes, the eyebrow arches project ... the nose [110] flattened, the root of the nose squashed, the nostrils gaping wide, the lips thick ... the teeth wide with little space between ... the neck large, the shoulders wide and straight, the chest strong and long, the members robust, the joints thick. Rather often for the woman, sometimes for the man, a fairly pronounced steatopygia.

142 The skin is in all tints, from light maroon to dark black. The height is a little above average . . .

181 "The Bambara is a bumpkin; he is dull and slow to understand, but he clings to his ideas, doubtless rare, and has an insurmountable stubbornness. He is patient; he endures every tyranny and submits to every calamity with a stupefying resignation. But when he has resolved to exact vengeance by force or by exercising his rights, nothing can stop him. He does not know how to present himself, he has trouble explaining himself, he always goes on interminably before coming to the point, and even though speaking deliberately, his eyes averted or fixed on the ground, he only pronounces half of the words, which makes it difficult to understand him."

These few extracts at least have the merit of giving a measure of the extent to which the Bambara is incomprehensible to the White.

II. Refutation of the Traditional Theory

The Bambara is, in fact, intelligent, patient, and stubborn, so many qualities indispensable for living in this difficult country. We have been able to show, in the course of this study, how coherent his metaphysical system was, its intellectual rigor, and how it influenced all social and economic life. But we must insist on this point: such a system is not the fruit of the idle speculations of a few privileged minds; it is lived by all, understood in its parts by all members of the society and in its totality by numerous old men.

153 The absence of a system of writing like our own obliges the Bambara to possess all this knowledge himself, and his prodigious 181 memory astonishes the White. But the most remarkable thing in his intellectual makeup is the facility with which he has managed to seize our modes of thought, so different from his traditional thought, and to assimilate our vision of the world; there is no great school in France that is not within his reach. The astonishing ease with which he is able to assimilate our language and our thought is adequate proof of the suppleness of his mind which has always been trained in all the speculative subtleties.

181 The stubbornness he exhibits in certain cases is often his only manner of defending his traditions, which are the very stuff of his life. These traditions were formed in the course of thousands of years of experience in a hard country where life is not a natural thing.

4: Henry--279 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Tattoo worn by the women of Bani country.

Tattoo worn around the breasts by young girls of Ségou and made by themselves.

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4: Henry--282 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

Excised girl in the dress-up attire of Bani country.

Excised girl dressed up.